



TO: Community Technology & Telecommunications Commission

FROM: John Speirs, Office of Telecommunications & Regulatory Affairs

DATE: September 9, 2015

SUBJECT: Digital Inclusion Initiative Update

This memo provides an update on implementation of the Digital Inclusion Initiative Strategic Plan and supporting programs funded by the Grant for Technology Opportunities Program (GTOPs).

The Digital Inclusion Steering Committee | Providing Direction for the Strategic Plan

The community-wide effort to support digital inclusion in Austin, Texas is an engaging and collaborative initiative. The Austin City Council reaffirmed its support when it approved the [Digital Inclusion Strategic Plan](#) on November 20, 2014. The City of Austin's 2014 Digital Inclusion Strategy is a dynamic plan to utilize community assets to overcome barriers, ensuring all residents have access to the skills and devices necessary to engage in our digital society. With the insights gained from the steering committee, Staff will present an update to the [Community Technology and Telecommunications Commission](#) based on insights gathered.

With facilitation expertise and training passed onto the [City's Digital Inclusion team](#) by the City's Chief Innovation Officer, Kerry O'Connor, Steering Committee meetings involve active exercises that elicit out-of-the-box thinking, engaged participation, and meaningful, Austin-centric conclusions. At this one-year check in, the Steering Committee heard progress being made on engaging underserved communities, and highlights of programs funded by the [City's Grant for Technology Opportunities Program \(GTOPs\)](#). The Committee participated in a strategic co-creation exercise to unlock eight of the plan's (25) initiatives, those initiatives that benefit from more tactical insights to enable implementation.

The Steering Committee was also provided an update on the initiatives being led by the [Housing Authority of the City of Austin \(HACA\)](#) and its Unlocking the Connection initiative serving all public housing authority residents with free and affordable devices, training programs offered by its partner programs including [Austin Free-Net](#), [Skillpoint Alliance](#) and [Goodwill](#) among others.



(Steering Committee Members Catherine Crago, Wenhong Chen, Joe Straubhaar and Sharon Strover participate in August 8, 2015 Steering Committee Meeting)

Lastly, the Steering Committee was provided an update on The Digital Empowerment Community of Austin. A priority [initiative](#) from the strategic plan, this will be a cohesive network of organizations and stakeholders working to provide access to technology in our community. The Community will convene to collaborate and brainstorm on challenges and opportunities. The Community will also stay connected with each other through an online, web-based platform for knowledge-sharing, storytelling and data visualization. We are partnering with a team of volunteer civic hackers to build this webtool. This project was started at the [ATX Hack for Change](#) and will be completed this Fall.

Stay tuned to this newsletter in the coming weeks and months to learn more about the launch of the Digital Empowerment Community of Austin and Engagement Strategy enabling us to formally and creatively integrate our community partners into the larger digital inclusion network. It will strengthen our collective ability to help residents build digital skills.

Digital Inclusion Strategic Plan Implementation

Action Plan Indicators	Connect	Engage	Include	Integrate	Coordinate
	Initiatives <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4.1.1 • 4.1.2 • 4.1.3 • 4.1.4 	Initiatives <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4.2.4 • 4.2.5 • 4.2.6 	Initiatives <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4.3.1 • 4.3.4 • 4.3.5 	Initiatives <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4.4.2 	Initiatives <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4.5.2 • 4.5.3
	1	12	5	4	3
	Program supporting this category	Programs supporting this category	Programs supporting this category	Programs supporting this category	Programs supporting this category
	Key Audiences Served <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public housing residents Vulnerable populations At-risk youths Individuals with disabilities Educators Residents of key underserved areas Digital inclusion service providers 		Total FY 15 funds <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>\$397,774 Total</u> \$200,000 GTOPs + matching funds 		

Digital Empowerment Community of Austin



DIGITAL EMPOWERMENT COMMUNITY OF AUSTIN

DECA

- DECA UPDATE
- First Meeting
 - When: October 29th 10:00 am – 12:00 pm
 - Where: Asian American Resource Center
 - Meeting Goals
- Engagement Goals:
 - Conduct a workshop for organizations to successfully apply for GTOPs
 - Establish a working group to identify common goals and opportunities for digital inclusion learning models

Gigabytes | ConnectHome

ConnectHome is an initiative recently announced by the U.S. Development (HUD) and the Obama Administration -- a pilot initiative that will **accelerate broadband adoption by children and families living in HUD-assisted housing** across the nation. ConnectHome is modeled after Austin's local program called [Unlocking the Connection](#), launched last fall at the Austin Housing Authority's Booker T. Washington public housing community with an announcement from HUD Secretary Castro.

Representatives from the Housing Authority of the City of Austin, the City of Austin, Austin Free-Net and Google Fiber led a panel discussion at the [National ConnectHome Summit](#) in Washington, D.C. in August to share what they have learned about the need for diverse partnerships, strong training curriculum, available devices and more to make these collaborations a success for residents. For more information about ConnectHome: <http://connecthome.hud.gov/>



(Panelists (L-R) Dr. Ben Kramer, Rondella Hawkins, Sylvia Blanco, Robin Medina, Catherine Crago and Norma Fernandez)

Please let me know if you have any questions. I can be reached at 512.974.3510 or you can email me at john.speirs@austintexas.gov.

Attachments: Action Plan Indicators (Program Implementation)